face of declining traffic and increasing financial deficit.

(c) Mumbai Port being very old port is not favourably placed to compete with JNPT in handling containers.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Smuggling of Cars by Mumbai Port Trust

2981. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Mumbai Port Trust is smuggling cars through illegal way and selling them in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that such illegal transported cars have been confiscated at Mumbai; and

(c) if so, the action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Mumbai Port Trust is not involved in smuggling of cars. However, instances have come to light that imported cars parked in the premises of Mumbai Port have been stolen replacing them with old cars and sold in the country.

(b) Yes, Sir. Some of the stolen cars have been recovered and kept in their custody by Mumbai Police.

(c) The matter is being invested by the Mumbai Police. Vigil and security have been increased in and around the warehouses where containers containing imported cars are stored.

Port Connectivity Project

2982. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up a huge Port-Connectivity Project for connecting all major ports in the country to the nearest National Highway;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the total money sanctioned for the project;

(d) whether the work has been started in any segment and if so, the details thereof;

(e) if answer to part (d) be in the negative, the reasons therefor and by when the work is likely to be started; and

(f) by when the entire project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (f) As all the Major Ports are already connected to the nearest National Highways, there is no project, at present, to further connect them to the nearest National Highways.

Expansion Plan of SCI

2983. DR.Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether tonnage under Indian Flagships have come down by 10 per cent and reduced to only 30 per cent whereas both tonnage coming in and going out of the country is on the rise; and

(b) if so, the major expansion plans proposed by the Shipping Corporation of India to help growth of Indian Shipping Industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Though the share of Indian shipping in overseas trade has been hovering around 30% during the last 10 years, the cargo carried in real terms has increased from 38.86 million tonnes in 1990-91 to 70.58 million tonnes in 1999-2000. The Shipping Corporation of India has already placed orders for construction of 8 vessels during 2000-2001 and has also proposed to acquire 10 more vessels during the current financial year to help growth of Indian Shipping Industry.

Constitutional Amendment for ban on Conversion

†2984. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has made a demand for amendments in the Constitution for imposing ban on conversion in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.